

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

For the Year 1904.

To the HEAVITREE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you my Report on the Health and Sanitary condition of your District for the year ending December 31st, 1904.

The area of the District in acres is 3500, and the population (including the inmates of the Public Institutions) at the Census of 1901 was 7527, with a total of 1533 inhabited houses; while the average number of persons per house was stated to be 4·9. Since then there has been a steady increase, both in population and inhabited houses; and, by placing the former at 8300 to the middle of 1904, I do not think I am over-estimating the growth. This number includes 452 persons, who have been brought into the District on account of sickness or infirmity, and who are living in Public Institutions; but, as these do not belong to the District, the corrected total is 7848, which is an increase of 315 over that for the previous year.

The natural increase, or excess of births over deaths, was 82.

VITAL STATISTICS.—*Births.*

During the past year 193 births have been registered (92 boys and 101 girls), a decrease of 27 on the previous year, and equal to a rate of 24·59 per 1000 of the population, which is 4·6 below that for 1903, but well above the average.

The following table gives the birth-rate and number of births for the past 8 years.

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
Number of Births }	146	142	155	134	130	154	220	193
Birth-Rate	20·86	19·86	21·30	18·10	17·19	21·30	29·20	24·59

The highest monthly return was 22 in September, and the lowest 6 in March.

As in the two previous years, and contrary to the general rule, there was a majority of female births.

Deaths.

The total number of deaths registered in the District during the year was 155, which is an increase of 17 on that for 1903, and equal to a rate of 18·67 per 1000 living. From this a deduction of 52 deaths among “non-residents” must be made and those of 8 residents who died in Institutions beyond the District—namely, 6 in the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, 1 in the St. Thomas’s Union Workhouse, and 1 in the Heavitree Fever Hospital, Pinhoe—must be added. The number thus corrected was 111 (53 males and 58 females) and equal to a rate of 14·14 per 1000 of the population (7848); this is ·6 above that for 1903, and also a fraction above the average, as you may see by the following table, which shows the number of deaths among those belonging to the District and the corresponding rate for each of the past 8 years.

<i>Year.</i>	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
Number of } Deaths	95	95	108	74	83	104	102	111
Death-Rate	13·57	13·27	16·18	10·87	11·69	14·39	13·54	14·14

INFANT MORTALITY.

The number of fatal cases among infants under one year of age was 25, or more than double that for the previous year; and, as the births were fewer than in 1903, the rate per 1000 births registered was much higher, namely, 129 against 54.

This is the highest rate of Infant mortality since 1898, and is principally due to the prevalence of Whooping Cough and Diarrhœa, these two diseases being the assigned causes of 13 out of the 25 deaths, as compared with 1 in 12 for 1903. The average rate for the 7 preceding years was 101 per 1000 births, and below may be seen the actual figures for each year.

Year.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
Deaths of Infants under 1 year	22	21	14	12	9	19	12	25
Rate per 1000 births registered	150	132	90	89	69	123	54	129

ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE.

Seventeen deaths from the 7 principal Zymotic Diseases have been registered, equal to a rate of 2·16 per 1000 of the population. This number is nearly double that for the preceding year, and is also much above the average. With the exception of 1, all these deaths were caused by Whooping Cough and Diarrhœa. The only satisfactory feature is that only one death was due to a Notifiable Infectious Disease, which is equal to a rate of 0·1 per 1000, and is much below the average.

CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH.

This table also shews the total number of deaths at each age period, and the corresponding per-centage of total deaths belonging to the District.

CAUSES.	All Ages.	Under 1 year	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 years and upwards.
Whooping Cough ...	10	7	3	...	...	...	...
Enteric Fever ...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Diarrhœa ...	6	6	...	...	...	...	...
Enteritis ...	2	1	...	...	...	...	1
Phthisis ...	10	...	...	1	4	5	...
Other Tubercular Diseases ...	4	1	...	1	...	2	...
Cancer ...	10	...	...	...	...	6	4
Bronchitis ...	4	...	1	...	...	2	1
Pneumonia ...	6	1	3	...	1	1	...
Alcoholism ...	3	...	...	...	...	3	...
Venereal Diseases ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Premature Births ...	2	2	...	...	...	...	...
Heart Diseases ...	8	...	...	...	...	5	3
Accidents ...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Suicides ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Senile Decay ...	7	...	...	...	...	...	7
All other causes ...	36	6	1	1	...	14	14
All causes ...	111	25	8	4	5	39	30
Per-centage of total deaths ...	...	22·5	7·2	3·6	4·5	35·1	27·0

The cause of death was not certified in 4 cases.

There were 3 sudden deaths of men aged 58, 69 and 74 respectively, on two of which inquests were held.

DISTRIBUTION OF DEATHS.

The incidence of deaths has been as follows:—Fore Street with adjoining streets and courts 27; Polsloe Park Estate 21; South Wonford 14; Goldsmith Place (including Park Street and Alpha Street) 9; Port View Estate and adjoining houses 9; Whipton Lane (including Newcombe street and adjoining Terraces) 8; Whipton 5, and East Wonford 4.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

(a) <i>Causes of Death, &c.</i>				
<i>Cause.</i>				<i>Number.</i>
Influenza	...	...	...	1
Enteritis	...	...	...	1
Erysipelas	...	...	...	1
Phthisis	...	...	...	3
Cancer	...	...	...	2
Pneumonia	...	...	...	6
Venereal Diseases	...	...	...	1
Heart Diseases	...	...	...	6
Diseases of the Nervous System	...	...	...	16
Senile Decay	...	...	...	9
All other causes	...	...	...	6
Total				52

(b) <i>Distribution of Deaths.</i>				
				<i>Number.</i>
Exeter City Asylum	...	...	...	42
Wonford House Asylum	...	...	...	10

(c) <i>Ages at Death.</i>				
25 to 65 years	...	...	...	36
65 and upwards	...	...	...	16

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Table shewing the number of cases notified in each month of 1904.

DISEASE.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Tl
Erysipelas	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	2	2	...	...	1	8
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
Scarlet Fever	1	5	...	4	5	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	16
Enteric Fever	..	...	1	1	..	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	4

It may be of interest to here tabulate the number of notifications received during the past 8 years.

Year.	Small Pox.	Cholera.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Erysipelas.	Scarlet Fever.	Typhus Fever.	Enteric Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Total for 12 Months.
1897	...	...	3	...	5	4	..	8	1	21
1898	...	...	2	...	4	3	...	8	..	17
1899	...	...	2	...	5	6	..	63	...	76
1900	...	...	1	...	4	11	...	17	...	33
1901	...	...	3	..	14	136	...	3	...	156
1902	1	..	5	..	2	63	...	3	...	74
1903	...	...	3	...	6	57	...	6	...	72
1904	...	...	...	...	8	16	...	4	...	28
Totals for 8 years	1	...	19	...	48	296	...	112	1	477

It is satisfactory to note that the total number of notifications in 1904 was much lower than that in any of the 3 preceding years.

No notifications of Small Pox, Diphtheria, Membranous Croup, Typhus Fever, or Puerperal Fever have been received during the year. The entire absence of Diphtheria is especially noteworthy, nor were there, as far as I know, any suspicious sore throats in the District.

ERYSIPELAS.

There has been an increase in the number of notifications from 6 in 1903 to 8. Six of these occurred in the Exeter City Asylum, 1 case of which proved fatal. It is a curious fact that out of 30 cases notified in the last 4 years 19 were from this Asylum, and none from Wenford House Asylum

SCARLET FEVER.

There has been a decided falling-off in the number of cases of Scarlatina from 57 in 1903 to 16, and there were only 11 infected houses as 9 cases were from 4 houses.

In 15 of these cases removal to the Hospital was necessary ; in the remaining instance there was plenty of room for home isolation, but there was no one in a fit state of health to look after the child, so this one was also removed.

The sources of infection are fairly clear. In February 2 children were discovered in the peeling stage who had not been isolated—result, 5 notifications. These houses were disinfected, and the offending parents were cautioned.

In the first week of May and the end of April there was another small outbreak, and as 5 out of 9 occurred among children of the same school I examined every child in that school ; in a few instances there was room for suspicion, and these were kept under special observation for a time. This made the mothers more careful to thoroughly remove any slight roughness of the skin as quickly as possible, and since that date in May there was not a single notification from the Heavitree Schools.

An equal number of boys and girls were attacked, and the average age was 9 years.

Charts showing the weekly notifications for each of the past 3 years may be seen at the end of the Report.

ENTERIC FEVER.

Four cases of this disease were notified, (against 6 in 1903) and the yearly average for 6 previous years (excluding the epidemic of 1899) was 7.5, while that for the past 8 years has been 14. Two cases were removed to hospital, 1 of which died. In one house defects were found in the house drains, and these have since been remedied ; another house which was supposed to be infected had new drains laid.

OTHER DISEASES.

MEASLES.

This disease was very little in evidence during the year, and there was no death recorded.

WHOOPIING COUGH.

A widespread outbreak of this affection occurred, lasting for 3 or 4 months, and resulting in 10 deaths, (against 1 in 1903); there was a large number of infants under 1 year of age attacked.

INFLUENZA.

This disease, which was practically absent for 11 months, became very prevalent about the middle of December; it was not, however, assigned as the primary cause of death in any instance among those belonging to the District. One death was registered from 1 of the Public Institutions.

PHTHISIS.

The death-rate from this disease, which was lower in 1903 than in previous years, rose to 1·27, the actual number of deaths having been 10 (5 males and 5 females); the average yearly number for the past 7 years has been 9·8, and the average rate 1·4; the following table gives the actual figures for each year.

<i>Year,</i>	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
Number of Deaths ...	15	11	9	8	10	6	10
Death-Rate ...	2·3	1·65	1·32	1·15	1·38	0·79	1·27

These figures do not include deaths which occurred in either of the Public Institutions in the District.

The question of creating a Hospital District, for the purpose of providing an Isolation Hospital for Phthisis, was recently discussed by the Devon County Council.

To have any material effect in lessening the prevalence of this disease such an Isolation Hospital for the whole county should be large enough to accommodate an enormous number of Patients, and Patients in all stages of the disease should be admitted. The majority of existing Sanatoria for

Consumption do not admit advanced cases (probably because it would ruin their annual record of "discharged cured"); yet these cases are much more infectious than those in the incipient stage.

The average yearly number of deaths for the 4 years, 1900 to 1903, was 333 in the Rural and Urban Districts of South Devon *alone*, which means that there have been from 750 to 1000 persons (probably many more) suffering from Pulmonary Tuberculosis in South Devon (excluding the County Boroughs of Exeter, Plymouth, and Devonport); and, if one can judge from experience in the small District of Heavitree, at least three-fourths of the total have been among the poorer classes and could not be properly isolated at home.

The following particulars of deaths from Phthisis and Cancer in your District may be of interest:—

PHTHISIS.

<i>Address.</i>	<i>Sex.</i>	<i>Age.</i>	<i>Occupation.</i>
Polsloe Road	... male	14	...
Fore Street ...	... female	15	...
Baker Street	... male	19	Shop Assistant.
Wonford Street	... female	22	Maid Servant.
Baker Street	} male	22	Musical Instru- ment Maker.
South View Terrace	... female	29	Married Woman.
Baker Street	... male	36	Engineer.
Alpha Street	... female	39	Married Woman.
Newcombe Street	... „	48	Dressmaker.
North Street	... male	60	Publican.

CANCER.

Polsloe Road	... female	29	Nil. Single.
Wonford Street	... „	48	Married Woman.
Fore Street	... „	47	Nil. Single.
Baker Street	... male	64	Woollen Draper.
Magdalen Road	... female	64	Nil. Single.
Fore Street	... „	64	Married Woman.
Regent Square	... „	67	...
North Street	... „	67	...
Wonford ...	... „	70	...
St. John's Road	... male	72	Retired Butcher.

With regard to the remaining diseases causing death during the year, Pneumonia and Bronchitis accounted for 10, an increase of 4 on the preceding year. All the others showed about the usual average.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

The sanitary condition of the District has received constant supervision during the year, and the decadence of Scarlet Fever and Enteric or Typhoid Fever, and also the entire absence of Diphtheria, are evidence that it has been very satisfactory.

House Accommodation.

This is ample. The majority of the houses are newly built, and there is sufficient open space about each house. All houses in course of erection are frequently inspected by Mr. Simpson, Surveyor to the Council, and any infringements of the Building Bye-laws are dealt with. At the Census of 1901 there were 1533 inhabited houses, and, thanks to Mr. Havill and the Rate Collector, I am able to state that these have been increased to 1975 at the end of 1904.

Two cases of overcrowding have been reported. Notices were served on the owners of the property, and the nuisance was abated in both cases.

Plans for the erection of 60 new dwelling houses and one Chapel have been approved by the Council during the year.

Fire Hydrants are provided on the extensions of the water mains, so that the new houses may be protected in case of fire.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

The number of old and defective drains repaired has been 22, and a sewer has been provided for the "Brick and Tile" Estate by the extension of the newly-laid Polsloe Priory Sewer.

EXCREMENT DISPOSAL.

A few isolated cottages are provided with earth closets, but all houses in the more thickly-populated portion of the

District have water closets. There are still some old water closets without flushing cisterns, but this is not allowed in any of the new houses.

HOUSE REFUSE REMOVAL, &c.

This is done by a Contractor under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector; the refuse is collected once a week from all houses, and twice a week from the courts and alleys.

The cleansing of the streets and roadways is carried out by men employed by the Council, and this also is under the Sanitary Inspector's supervision.

WATER SUPPLY.

This supply is derived from two sources—I. River water. This is taken by the Exeter City Corporation from the Exe at Stoke Railway Bridge, a few hundred yards above the junction of the river Culm, pumped to reservoirs at Dane's Castle and filtered. During the past year I did not receive any complaint as to the quality of this water, but several of having the supply cut off at most inconvenient hours without warning, II. Well water; this is a much harder water, and is derived from shallow wells, of which there are still a large number in the District.

Places over which the Council have Supervision.

(a) *Common Lodging Houses*.—None in the district.

(b) *Slaughter Houses*.—There are 7 of these and all are regularly inspected, the walls are lime-washed quarterly, the floor washed when slaughtering is completed, and the offal removed within 24 hours.

(c) *DAIRIES, MILK SHOPS, AND COWSHEDS.*

There have been 2 additions to the register. On inspection I found the cowsheds had been kept in a fairly good condition, and the dairies exceedingly good, in fact some of them are, I believe, second to none in the County in the matter of cleanliness; the milk supplied is of good quality, and all the samples taken for analysis during the year were found genuine.

(d) *Petroleum Stores*.—The number of licensed premises is 4, each of which is inspected and found to meet the requirements of the Local Authority, and the Petroleum Act.

(e) *Public Lighting*.—This has been much improved by the use of the incandescent burners on the gas lamps.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

Action is taken by the Police, several samples of food have been taken, and all were found genuine.

FACTORY and WORKSHOPS ACT, 1901.

Section 132 of this Act requires that an Annual Report be made *re* its administration in this district.

As required by Sec. 131, a Register of Workshops and Factories is kept.

SANITATION. (Sec. 2-8.)

(a) *Cleanliness*.—All the Workshops and Workplaces which were inspected during the year, were kept in a cleanly state, and free from effluvia, save in 5 instances which have since been improved.

(b) *Air space and ventilation*.—There was 1 case of overcrowding, and 2 of insufficient ventilation ; these defects have been remedied.

(c) *Drainage of floors*. (Sec. 8.)—Floors generally good, 2 defects were found and remedied. This Section does not apply to Workshops in which men only are employed.

(d) *Sanitary Accomodations*.—These are suitable and sufficient. Two defects found and remedied.

(e) In one instance the Abstract of the Act was not posted up as required (sec. 128) and I forthwith gave written notice thereof to H.M. Inspector of Factories.

BAKEHOUSES.

There are no underground Bakehouses in the district, but the retail houses number 7.

- (a) No Bakehouse contains or communicates directly with a water-closet, privy, or ash-pit. No cistern supplying water to a water-closet is used for supplying water to a Bakehouse.
- (b) All inside walls and ceilings of rooms are kept in a cleanly state.
- (c) No places on same level with a Bakehouse, and forming part of the same building, are used as sleeping place.

Home Work.

The occupiers of any Factories or Workshops in the district, giving out specified kinds of work, must twice a year send a copy of their list of outworkers, with the names and addresses, to the Council.

No such lists have yet been received; and therefore I cannot state the number of houses in which home work (as defined by the Act) is done.

One list of outworkers has just been received from a neighbouring Sanitary Authority.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES (PREVENTION) ACT.

When a notification of Infectious Disease is received, the infected premises are at once inspected, and, if isolation at home be impracticable, the Patient is removed in an ambulance to the Isolation Hospital. After removal the rooms, clothing, &c., are disinfected by Sulphur Dioxide and Jeyes' Fluid, or, if necessary, the clothing, &c., is treated in a Steam Disinfecter.

If the case be isolated at home, the precautions being taken by those in charge are periodically inspected, and advice given where necessary. Children in the infected house are not allowed to attend school for stated periods after termination of the illness and disinfection of the house.

School teachers are asked to send home children suffering from suspicious sore throat or rashes, and to inform the Sanitary Authority.

A Nurse is permanently employed by the Council. Disinfectants are supplied free of charge to the poor. The smoke test is applied to drains in infected houses, if necessary.

Anti-diphtheritic serum is supplied gratuitously for the poorer Patients; also sterilized swabs and bottles for taking specimens for bacteriological examination, the cost of which is borne by the Authority.

In cases of death from Phthisis among the poor the rooms are disinfected gratuitously.

FEVER HOSPITAL.

The number of cases treated in this Hospital during the year was 18.

The following table shows the number of cases admitted in each month of 1904.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Admitted	1	5	...	4	5	...	...	...	1	...	1	1
Discharged Cured	2	1	3	2	...	9	...	...	...	1	...	...
Deaths	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Remaining on the last day of each month	1	5	2	4	9	...	...	...	1	...	1	1

There were 4 cases of Scarlet Fever remaining on the 31st of December, 1903.

Table showing the number of cases of Infectious Diseases treated in hospital for each month of the past 4 years.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total for 12 months.	Deaths.
1901	...	...	...	...	11	23	7	8	18	9	9	8	93	...
1902	5	13	7	1	2	2	2	3	2	4	2	4	47	...
1903	5	...	1	...	...	6	10	2	1	7	5	2	39	...
1904	1	5	...	4	5	...	...	..	1	...	1	1	18	1
Total for 4 years	11	18	8	5	18	31	19	13	22	20	17	15	197	1

Total number treated, 197. Total number of deaths, 1.

The ages of patients admitted during the past year ranged from 7 to 15 years, and the average duration of each patient's detention in hospital was 42·5 days, practically the same as that for the previous year.

In the past year no difficulty whatever was experienced in getting parents or guardians to consent to the removal of their children to hospital, in fact the difficulty was more the other way, and in one instance I failed to convince the guardians that removal was not advisable, and have regretted it ever since.

I am, Gentlemen,

. Your obedient Servant,

J. F. WOLFE, M.B.,

Med. Off. of Health.

CHART SHEWING WEEKLY NOTIFICATIONS OF SCARLET FEVER. 1904.

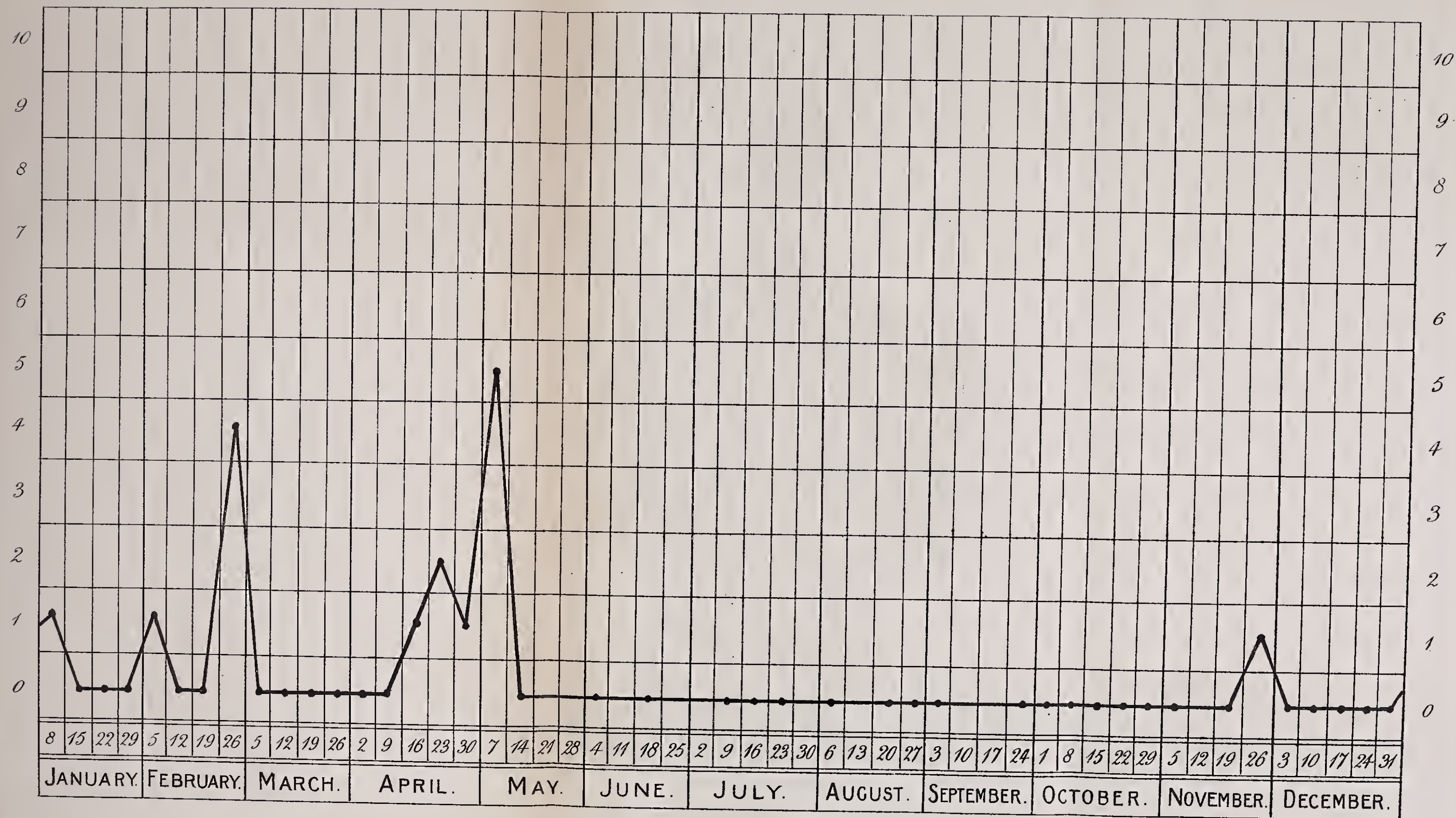




CHART SHEWING WEEKLY NOTIFICATIONS OF SCARLET FEVER.

1902 AND 1903

